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Volume 59 Berkeley, Calif. December 1977 Number11

Oakland Christmas Bird Count - 1977

The 1977 Oakland Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Sunday, December 18, and we're hoping to regain our stature as a national leader in this traditional Audubon Society event. The success of the count depends on each field team having a good leader, helpful spotters, and an accurate recorder. Last year's team leaders have been mailed instruction packets with checklists and maps if they indicated that they would be leading again this year. There is always a need for additional birders and helpers.

As was noted in the November *Gull,* additional feeder coverage is essential. It is the feeder coverage that has given us many of our national records for high species counts. The feeders also attract and keep rarities. If you have a feeder in your yard and will be able to keep a tally of birds visiting it on count day, please contact Clark Gleason at 843-8846.

If you are interested in helping with the field count or want more information about it, call Bob Hirt at 622-5148 (work) or 566-4401 (home).

Inflation has struck this year's Christmas Count! The participation fee has been **raised to $1.50** for all field and feeder participants. Earlier *Gulls* and the flier sent in October indicating that the fee would be only $1.00. Apparently the count and publication costs have gone the way of your friendly neighborhood steak and the fee had to be increased. We hope that this will not diminish anyone's enthusiasm.

After the count, there will be soup, bread and appropriate libations served in the Palm Room of the Berkeley YMCA at 2001 Allston Way. across from the main post office, from 4 to 9 p.m. Please join us for a rewarding day and a friendly evening. The species "countdown" will begin at about 7 p.m. This meeting will be in place of our general

membership meeting for December. If you can't participate in the count but would like to attend the compilation, please call Vera at the GGAS office, 843-2222.

—BOB HIRT
Christmas Count Compiler

RESULTS OF THE 1976 OAKLAND CHRISTMAS COUNT

The results of last year's (1976) Oakland Christmas Count are now out and it is clear that we must really work to keep our present status and retain some of our national records.

OBSERVERS	1974	1975	1976
Field	197	172	175
Feeder	59	51	43
Total	256	223	218
Rank in U.S. & Canada	1st	1st	2nd
SPECIES	178	179	169
Rank in U.S. & Canada	8th	10th	17th
HIGH SPECIES COUNT	24	15	7
Rank in U.S. & Canada	2nd	2nd	unranked

Since both total species and particularly high counts are dependent on wide coverage as well as birding expertise, the importance of participation is clear. In 1976 the Oakland Count missed two national records by only one bird each.

A summary of the Oakland species "High Counts" is provided below:

NATIONAL HIGH

	1974	1975	1976
Scaup Species		82,857	Not listed
Surf Scoter	20,975	30,100*	12,263
Cooper's Hawk	31*	20	(Note 1)
Black-bellied Plover	3,910*	1,896	——
Red Knot	350	——	——
Band-tailed Pigeon	1,274	——	——
Great Horned Owl	146*	——	(Note 2)
Saw-whet Owl	11	9	14
Anna's Hummingbird	857	——	——
Common (Red Sh.) Flicker	773	——	——
Steller's Jay	1,518	796	875
Scrub Jay	2,349*	——	——
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	1,497*	1,278	1,536*
Plain Titmouse	545*	344	——
Common Bushtit	3,534*	2,358	2,544
Wrentit	1,020	——	——
Bewick's Wren	395	206	(Note 3)
California Thrasher	172	——	——
Varied Thrush	594	——	——
Hermit Thrush	288	289	——

Hutton's Vireo	72	40	——
Rufous-sided Towhee	1,043*	551	557
Brown Towhee	2,110*	1,248	(Note 4)
Dark-eyed (Ore.) Junco	——	——	2,705
Golden-crowned Sparrow	2,761	——	(Note 5)
Fox Sparrow	783*	509	(Note 3)

*All Time National Record

NOTES

1. Oakland (21) Pt. Reyes (22)
2. More intensive owling may result in returning national high to Oakland
3. All time record lost in 1976
4. Better habitat coverage could easily regain the national high
5. So close yet so far—Oakland (2,278), Pt. Reyes (2,279)

Field Trips Calendar

Wednesday, December 7—A three to four mile walk at **Lake Chabot.** Meet at Piper's Restaurant parking lot, MacArthur Blvd. and Dutton Ave. at **8:30 a.m.** Take the MacArthur freeway (Hiway 580) to Dutton Avenue off-ramp, San Leandro. Leader: Delpha deTimofeev (632-5176).

Saturday and Sunday, December 10-11—Sacramento and Grey Lodge Wildlife Refuges. On Saturday meet at Grey Lodge Refuge Headquarters at 9 a.m. Approach via Hiway 99 and follow signs out of Live Oak or Gridley. On Sunday meet at the Sacramento Refuge Headquarters, seven miles south of Willows at 9 a.m. There is a state campground at Colusa. See the November *Gull* for motels in Gridley. Leaders: Peter and Dolores White. (√)

Wednesday, December 14—Mini trip to **Bay Bridge Toll Plaza** to look for shore birds, terns and gulls. Meet at **10 a.m.** at the Holiday Inn parking lot just west of the Powell/Emeryville exit off the Eastshore freeway (Hiway 17). Leaders: Ted and Ruth Dement. Any questions call Ruth Voss (525-8032).

Wednesday, December 21—Mini trip to **Lake Merced** in San Francisco. Meet at **10 a.m.** at the south end of Sunset Blvd. parking lot. Accessible by the #72 Muni bus. Leader: Dan Murphy (564-0074).

Wednesday, December 28—Mini trip to the **Chain of Lakes, Buffalo Paddock and Spreckles Lake** in Golden Gate Park. Meet at **10 a.m.** at the North Lake, 43rd Ave. and Fulton St. Accessible by the #5 Muni bus. Leader: Dan Murphy (564-0074).

Carpooling—The trip marked (√) is one for which carpooling will be arranged. Call Kate Partridge, 849-1951 (home) or 642-5784 (work) between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. for arrangements from either side of the bay.

October Observations

It was considered a dull October on shore, but the most exciting pelagics ever experienced among organized groups more than made up the difference. For some time, the early October boat trips out of Monterey Bay have been justifiably famous. From the first to the twelfth of October, about ten chartered boats searched the bay. They found the Black and Ashy Storm-Petrel flock (10,000+ birds), up to a hundred Buller's (New Zealand) Shearwaters, a lingering Black-footed Albatross, and increasing Northern Fulmars. All the rare but regular species were present: a Flesh-footed Shearwater on 1 Oct., four to five Wilson's Storm-Petrels with the petrel flock, two Long-tailed Jaegers (JL), about four South Polar Skuas (another three passed Pigeon Point, San Mateo County, this fall; PM), up to three Xantus' Murrelets, and three Tufted Puffins. Even two long-absent Fork-tailed Storm-Petrels appeared (delighting DE). Better yet was the **Least Storm-Petrel** seen by observers familiar with the species (DD, DR).

All of that would have made this an exceptional fall. But two more birds proclaimed it spectacular; a Galapagos Storm-Petrel and a Streaked Shearwater. The **Galapagos Storm-Petrel** started as a "possible," reported in late September from a Los Angeles Audubon trip. The bird was refound by a Western Field Ornithologists' boat 1 Oct. (GMcC, RS, AS, DR, VR, LCB *et al*) and almost all on that boat saw it well; a tiny storm-petrel, smaller and grayer than adjacent Ashys, with a direct flight and an apparent all-white tail (caused by the long, triangular upper tail coverts). A few saw it 9 Oct. This is the third record for California (and North America); the previous birds were at Carmel 21 Jan. 1969 (beached) and off Ventura 18 Aug. 1976.

That was good—a state bird for almost all who saw it—but the best came on 9 Oct. when a **Streaked Shearwater** was leisurely watched, and even photographed, by two boatloads of birders (DR, JM, AS, DD, BMcC, BS, MLR *et al*). There is only one previous record anywhere in the eastern Pacific; an individual collected 3 Oct. 1975 near the same spot. One can hardly hope to see a more exciting bird.

Not only were the above confirmed species found, but rumors were flying about other unusual birds, and I mention them here only to have the possibilities in print. These are not, at present, verified sightings. On 9 Oct. a large blackish storm-petrel (heavier than adjacent Blacks) flew by in usual high arcs and some caught a glimpse of white on the rump. This superficially fits the description of the Sooty Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma markhami*), which comes from the same area as the Galapagos Storm-Petrel but has not been recorded in North America. On 2 Oct. a medium-sized bird with a white rump band and a somewhat

forked tail may have been a Harcourt's Storm-Petrel, previously recorded off San Diego 12 Sept. 1970. Finally, several partially albino Ashy Storm-Petrels caused confusion; one with a sharply defined white belly and whitish back resembled the pattern of the southern White-bellied Storm-Petrel, but was sized, flew, and otherwise like an Ashy, without the striking black-and-white of the rarity.

Coastal waters and estuaries had their share of interest. A **Yellow-billed Loon** below the Fish Docks, Point Reyes 3 Oct. (DDeS) is apparently the earliest record for the state. A **Little Blue Heron** at Abbott's Lagoon, Point Reyes, 2 Oct. fulfilled our quota of one per fall (KY, BSt). The first Eurasian Widgeon for the winter were a female at the Mendoza Ranch pond 23 Oct. (JW, JLa) and a bird on Bolinas Lagoon the same weekend. Two American Golden Plovers at the mouth of the Salinas River (BR) and eight at the Fish Docks (JW) 23 Oct. were regular, if uncommon, migrants. Exciting were two **Sharp-tailed Sandpipers,** 2 Oct. at the mouth of the Salinas River (LCB, BDP) and 15-17 Oct. at the Castroville sewage ponds (LCB, JP *et al*); there are still very few records for California. The season's first Glaucous Gull was at Pescadero 25 Oct. (BF *et al*). Two unusual Franklin's Gulls and a Black Tern were reported at the mouth of the Salinas River, 5-25 Oct. (BR).

Point Diablo on the Marin headlands continued to host Broad-winged hawks with singles on 2 Oct. (VR) and 5 Oct.. (MLR), while Monterey had another on 26 Oct. (AS). A total of 69 Lewis' Woodpeckers passed by Point Diablo 2 Oct.—quite a migration!

As previously noted, vagrants in general didn't overwhelm anyone, but there were some high spots. A White-winged Dove at the mouth of the Carmel River 1 Oct. was a surprise (VR, GA); only a couple reach our area each fall. Migrant Tropical Kingbirds put in a showing, as they always do in October: 2 Oct. at Point Pinos (VR), at two Point Reyes locations—Rogers Ranch 7 Oct. (EM) and Spaletta Ranch 9 Oct. (VR)—and 17-24 Oct. at Princeton (PM). Singles that arrived at Lake Merced, San Francisco, around 12 Oct. (DM, KY) and in Golden Gate Park (JM) appear to be the same individuals that successfully wintered last year. This is the first time a Tropical Kingbird has attempted a second winter at the same spot in California. A partial Farallon report tallied a Least Flycatcher in late Sept. (PRBO), while another of this much-sought-after species appeared at the mouth of the Carmel River 16 Oct. (PL).

Phenomenal is the report of a very probable **Blue Jay** on Point Diablo 21 Oct. (LCB). A long series of distinctive calls were heard but the bird could not be located. 1976 was a major invasion year to the northwest, and we can hope this is a precursor to some of that here. The out-of-range Bendire's Thrasher returned to its Courtland yard, where it

has wintered the last two years (E&AP).

A Red-eyed Vireo was banded at Bolinas 4 Oct. (PRBO) but the much rarer **Philadelphia Vireo** was sighted at the Carmel River 16-23 Oct. (BDP, JP, EM, GC). The Olema-Inverness area had five Black-and-white Warblers 4-23 Oct. (PW, RV, WMP), while the Carmel River had four 1-23 Oct. (DE, EM, PL) and another was at Half Moon Bay 24 Oct. (PM, TB). Point Reyes, Point Pinos and Lake Merced each had two Tennessee Warblers 30 Sept. - 25 Oct. (VR, GG, AG), while the Carmel River had one 16 Oct. (PL) and the Farallones had at least three. Last month the extreme rarity of **Black-throated Green Warblers** in our area was commented upon, but three were reported in October. Two were found dead: 16 Oct. in Buena Vista Park, San Francisco (*fide* LCB), and 20 Oct. in Kensington (KP). The only live individual was at the Carmel River 16-17 Oct. (BR *et al*). A Blackburnian Warbler was also there 5 Oct. (BF). Single Chestnut-sided Warblers flitted about Mendoza Ranch, Point Reyes, 5-7 Oct. (VR *et al*), Carmel River 16 Oct. (PL), and the Fish Docks, 21-22 Oct. (EM, BDP). Seventeen Blackpolls were scattered with five in Monterey County, four on Point Reyes, at least five on the Farallones, and three at Lake Merced 3-5 Oct. (LCB, VR). A **Pine Warbler** at Esplanade, Pacific Grove, 26 Sept. (AS) was only the eighth for California and the fourth for our area.

More Prairie Warblers arrived: the Fish Docks, 2 Oct. (JM) and Rodeo Lagoon, Marin County, 10 Oct. (PA). A fairly complete coastal count added twenty-five Palm Warblers in Marin County, ten in Monterey County and two in San Mateo County. Single Ovenbirds were at Mendoza Ranch 1-6 Oct. (JM), Fish Docks 17 Oct. (SW), and Mount Tamalpais 19 Oct. (DO), and a Northern Waterthrush frequented Lake Merced 4-12 Oct. (LCB *et al*). California's twenty-second **Connecticut Warbler** was photographed at Mendoza Ranch (AG); this was only the eighth mainland report for this warbler. The rare **Hooded Warbler** put in a surprisingly long stay at Sebastopol 28 Aug. - 15 Oct. (MP, VR, JM). The only mainland American Redstarts were at the Point Reyes Lighthouse 1 Oct. and the male which again returned to winter near Sebastopol on 10 Oct.

Bobolinks were identified at Bolinas 1 Oct. (BSt) and Point Pinos 2 Oct. (VR). Unexpected was an Orchard Oriole with a flock of White-crowned Sparows at Bodega Bay 15 Oct. (JM). A **Rusty Blackbird** appeared at the Carmel River 22 Oct. (BG, JA); most records are from late October through November. An Evening Grosbeak on Point Diablo 2 Oct. (VR) preceded up to thirty that have remained around Tilden Park since 14 Oct. (SA, IdT). An unusual coastal sighting was a Green-tailed Towhee at Tiburon 2 Oct. (TO), and an out-of-place Grass-

hopper Sparrow was at Nunes Ranch, Point Reyes 9 Oct. (EM), as was a Vesper Sparrow 3 Oct. at Neary's Lagoon, Santa Cruz (EM). Tree Sparrows, uncommon to the coast, were recorded at Inverness 18 Oct. (WMP) and three at Mendoza Ranch 23 Oct. (JLa, JW). Again, our cup of Clay-colored Sparrows overflowed: at least three on the Farallones (PRBO), Carmel River 2 Oct. (DE), and three on Point Reyes 9-22 Oct. (VR, JM, EM). Migrant White-throated Sparrows were at the Fish Docks 1-2 Oct. (JM), and Nunes Ranch 5 Oct. (VR) and 10 Oct. (CC); winterers should arrive next month. The winter's first Swamp Sparrow established a first park record in Golden Gate Park 25-26 Oct. (LCB, DR). Several Lapland Longspurs noted over the Fish Dicks 3 Oct. (DDeS) may have helped form the flock of about fifteen that remained at the Hall Ranch, along with two Chestnut-collared Longspurs, from 5 Oct. to the end of the period (VR, DD, BMcC, DR).

Corrections of November's *Observations*:

The Wheatear was photographed on Sept. 15, not Aug. 15.

The Canada Warbler at Davis was the first *inland* record, not the first Northern California record.

Observers:

Steve Abbors, Jeff Alban, Peter Allen, Garth Alton, Laurence C. Binford, Tony Bledsoe, Chris Carpenter, George Clarke, Ivalo deTimofeev, Dave DeSante, Donna Dittman, Dick Erickson, Bud Fry, Gene Gerlock, Bruce Gerow, Al Ghiorso, Jeri Langham (JLa), Paul Lehman, John Luther (JL), Eugene Makishima, Brian McCaffery, Guy McCaskie, Peter Metropoulos, Joe Morlan, Dan Murphy, Todd Olsen, Dee Orchard, Benjamin D. Parmeter, John Parmeter, Ellen & Arvil Parker, Melanie Perry, Katie Pigford, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, William M. Pursell, Van Remsen, Bob Richmond, Don Roberson, Mary Louise Rosegay, Barry Sauppe (BS), Arnold Small, Rich Stallcup, Bob Stewart (BSt), Ruth Voss, Pat Welsh, Jon Winter, Steve Wilson, Keiko Yamane.

—DON ROBERSON, *Observations Editor*
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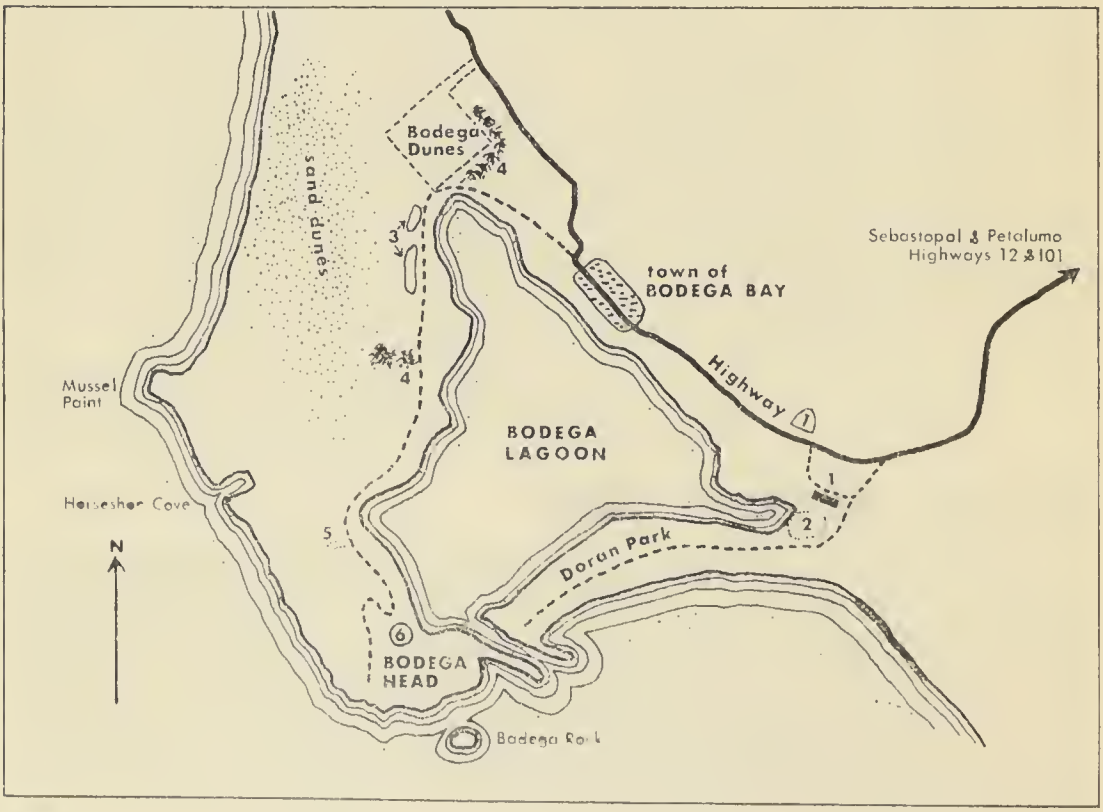
Birding Bodega Bay

One of the best of Northern California's coastal birding spots is the Bodega Bay area in Sonoma County. The area has a sizable shallow lagoon to provide a daily exposure of extensive mudflats, which are utilized by legions of shorebirds; rocky headlands on the ocean side, where littoral and pelagic species abound; and stands of vegetation to entice migrants and vagrants (Eastern Phoebe, Gray Catbird, and Magnolia Warbler are among those recorded). The area is at the foot

of a range of coastal mountains which are used as stock-grazing lands and are quite attractive to raptors. The combination of habitats results in a very diverse avifauna within a small area. Birding slacks off from June to early August, but at other times there is always a good show.

A big attraction of the year is the Rock Sandpipers which regularly spend November to March on the ocean side of Bodega Head or Mussel Point, the most southerly regular wintering spot around the north edge of coast. From Bodega Bay follow the road around the north edge of the lagoon (see map), up the head to the end, bearing right where the road divides on the head to the large ocean-view parking area. One to three Rock Sandpipers often are with the flocks of Black Turnstones and Surfbirds. Check the rocks directly below the parking area, then walk either north or south on the trails along the ocean side of the head to search for the flocks. Wandering Tattlers and Black Oystercatchers are also present. Brant's and Pelagic Cormorants, Black Oystercatchers, and Pigeon Guillemots all nest on the cliffs of the head. By using a scope, one can often see pelagic species from shore: Sooty Shearwaters and Northern Fulmars (in flight years) are the most common procellariformes, and alcids include Common Murre, Marbled Murrelet (uncommon), Ancient Murrelet, and Rhinoceros Auklet. Tufted Puffins nest in some years on Arch Rock, just a few miles to the north.



The lagoon itself holds fantastic numbers of grebes, loons, sea ducks, and shorebirds. Three of the four loons are easily found. Red-necked Grebes are best found in the channel between the rock jetties at the harbor mouth or the quiet waters of the bay just to the east of the jetties. Many Double-crested Cormorants inhabit the bay. "Black" Brant, formerly more common, still drop in on their spring flights (March - early May). Oldsquaws are few and irregular, as are geese and swans, but sixteen other species of ducks put in regular winter appearances.

White-tailed Kite, Red-tailed Hawk, Osprey and American Kestrel all nest here, and twelve other falconiformes have been listed. Thirty-seven species of shorebirds occur, most of them regularly, and there are records for Ruff and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. Thirteen species of gulls and five of terns have been observed here with regularity. A good area to check is the marshy shoreline to the west of the sewage plant (#2 on the map), where Pectoral Sandpipers are regular in September. The upper stretches of the sandy beaches on the bay side of Doran Park (there is an admission charge to enter the park itself) will generally produce some Snowy Plovers, as may other sandy areas on the mudflats at low tide. At high tide shorebirds gather in the pond below the motel (#1). Occasionally a Northern Shrike winters on the hillside above this pond.

On the north side of the lagoon, the small brackish ponds (#3) are good spots to see Virginia Rail and Sora. Snipe and phalaropes frequent these same pools. It is also the easiest spot for Marsh Wren, Common Yellowthroat and Red-winged Blackbird.

In the spring and fall it is wise to check the cypress groves (#4), the small canyon on the east edge of the head (#5), and the willows by the "hole-in-the-head" (#6), for vagrants. Many turn up each year. American Redstart and Blackpoll Warbler are regular in September and October.

Campgrounds are available in Doran Park or Bodega Dunes State Park. A convenient motel is located near the entrance to Doran Park. Meals may be obtained at establishments in the town of Bodega Bay, where there is also a gas station.

—GORDON L. BOLANDER

(Editor's note: This article was written in February, 1977, for *BIRDING* magazine. It appeared in the August, 1977 issue, Vol. 9, No. 4, and is reprinted here with a few very minor changes. Gordon Bolander, a contributor in many ways and over many years to birding in the Bay Area, died in April, 1977).

Conservation Notes

It is hoped that by the time you read this that H.R. 39, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, H.R. 3813, a bill to expand Redwood National Park, and H.R. 1771, a bill to include Mineral King in Sequoia National Park, have made it out of committee and onto the House floor. If the final vote on these bills has yet to be taken, please write your Representative and express your feelings on these bills.

The companion bill in the Senate for H.R. 39, S. 1500, is not expected to come up for a vote until next year. The companion bill to H.R. 3813 is S. 1976, which is lagging behind but there are hopes that it will pass before the year is out. S. 88 is the companion to H.R. 1771. Please write your Senators in reference to these bills.

The California Nongame Wildlife Conservation Program's third annual decal is available for a donation of $5 or more. Money donated for previous decals has been spent on guarding the peregrine falcon nest on Morro Rock and constructing wildlife drinking facilities in Southern Californian deserts, among other things. This year's decal features a peregrine falcon as its subject. Checks should be made out to "Nongame Wildlife" and sent to "Wildlife", Box DFG, Sacramento, CA 95801.

—CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

A Threat to the Emeryville Crescent

Presumably all GGAS members are concerned with the preservation of salt marsh bird habitat. The Emeryville Crescent (one and a half miles of shoreline stretching from the Bay Bridge toll plaza north to Powell Street) is the last remaining salt marsh in this part of San Francisco Bay. It is a major shorebird feeding and resting area. Twenty-eight species of shorebirds winter here. Water birds include ruddy ducks, scaup, canvasbacks, mallards, pintails, widgeon, goldeneyes, buffleheads, scoters, grebes and loons. Pelagic species and other rarities have been sighted. Ten species of gulls and seven species of terns are found here, and herons and egrets feed in the marsh. Endangered species in the area include Least Tern, Brown Pelican and the Clapper Rail, which nests here.

The Crescent is considered by GGAS to be an important area of the Oakland Christmas Count. GGAS representatives have recently met several times with staff and directors of the East Bay Regional Park District to discuss a proposed bicycle and hiking trail to go from Albany to Jack London Square. As this route includes passage along the Emeryville Crescent we are justifiably concerned.

The trail is to be constructed on the Cal Trans right-of-way and would be asphalted for a minimum of ten feet and graded and fenced

from the highway for fifteen or more feet. At high tide in windy conditions the water now comes to the roadway; consequently filling or boardwalks on piles would be necessary. This would damage the fragile marsh and interfere with the birds.

The National Audubon Society, the University of California, Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the Sierra Club have expressed concern about this proposed trail.

GGAS is not against bicycle and hiking trails in areas appropriate for such use. However, we do question the disturbance of a prime wildlife area since an alternate route on the opposite side of the freeway could be used. Unlimited access to the Crescent would encourage dogs and adventurous people to disturb the birds beyond their tolerance. Bicyclists can use less sensitive areas of the shoreline; birds, especially endangered nesting species, cannot.

Access to East Bay Shoreline Increased

Two more links toward the long-range goal of freeing San Francisco Bay waters for recreation and creating a trail rimming the East Bay from Fremont to Antioch have been achieved by the East Bay Regional Park District and other public agencies.

Early in September the Hayward shoreline—running for three miles north from the San Mateo bridge approach through historic Johnson and Hayward Landings to San Lorenzo—was opened up by multi-agency actions of EBRPD, the city of Hayward, Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (HARD), Alameda Flood Control and the unified school districts of Hayward and San Lorenzo.

The Hayward lands of 1,577 acres constitute the largest public park on on San Francisco Bay and are one of the largest locally-owned shoreline parks in the nation.

The second action, described by EBRPD Director Howard L. Cogswell of Hayward as a "significant small step", was the approval of a no-cost license agreement with the Oro Loma Sanitary District for a hiking-biking-riding trail between the Hayward shoreline and San Leandro Bay.

In 1970 the public had free access to only five miles of the entire 270-mile San Francisco Bay circumference which encompasses the shorelines of bays and rivers. The two new acquisitions have increased access to more than thirty miles.

According to Dr. Cogswell, not only will the newly-added Hayward shoreline be opened for public receration and education, but "these critical lands and marshes will now be preserved and restored to their historic quality . . . This restoration may well be the prime benefit in the effect on the improved ecology of the Bay and our entire Bay Area".

—CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Is It Only Water Over the Dam?

Oetober 21's aeeidental draining of Jewel Lake in Tilden Regional Park provided a disturbing look into the non-meshing of gears in the East Bay Regional Park Distriet. For a full week the lake lay dry exeept for a few fetid pools on whieh dead fish floated. A query to Park Headquarters the afternoon of Oetober 28, revealed that evidently no one there was aware of the problem.

It seemed vital to many GGAS members that the lake be refilled as soon as possible to provide a sanetuary for the migratory dueks that begin to arrive in mid-November. (Last year saw rare Hooded Mergansers and Ring-neeked Dueks, as well as Canvasbaeks and Ameriean Widgeon winter over.)

Phone ealls to Headquarters and some EBRPD Board members that weekend possibly hastened what eame next—water was allowed to flow out of Lake Anza, starting at noon on Oetober 31. It went downstream along Wildeat Creek and slowly began to fill Jewel Lake. One park employee told me that in his opinion the aetion eame too hastily. He eontended that it had not allowed work erews time to repair the faulty gate at the dam. Indeed, for some time during the filling process, water gushed out through the break at the same rate that had eaused the original drainage. That leakage was stopped within a day or two, and at the time of this writing the lake is at about normal level for the fall season.

We are extremely lueky to have our Regional Parks; we all enjoy them in many ways not exelusively eonfined to birding. So it is all the more troublesome when an area whieh is used by so many people suffers a sudden and traumatie shoek. Unfortunately, it also affords a very publie look at what seems, in this instanee, to be a ease of the right hand not knowing what the left is doing. Apparently there is a eommunieations gap of major proportions in park jurisdietion, and beeause the EBRPD has in its possession the stewardship of publie lands dear to many of us, we urge that they seek a solution to this problem, bearing in mind that, in most eases, there is a right as well as a left hand.

—NANCY CONZETT,
Editor

Books for Birders

Water Birds of California, by Howard L. Cogswell, illustrated by Gene Christman. University of California Press, Berkeley. $5.75

A long time in the making, this book was worth waiting for. It is more densely packed with information than any other "field guide" with whieh I am aequainted though its format may diseourage many birders from aetually earrying it into the field. It should really be read

through from the beginning, especially since the three introductory sections "Introduction", "Behavior of Water Birds", and "Identifying Water Birds") are not only unusually well done, but are important to understanding the rest of the book. In "Identifying Water Birds", for example, one is encouraged first to learn how to identify families before going on to species, and the author stresses behavioral characteristics as well as "field marks" when they are useful in identification. The same attention to the whole bird is given in the species accounts which comprise the bulk of the book; there is a great deal of information here on breeding and feeding habits, modes of flight and swimming, and many other details by which birds can be identified.

The final quarter of this 399-page book is devoted to an appendix containing "graphic calendars" and habitat distributions for each species. This section looks, at first glance, totally confusing and doesn't get much clearer after second and third glances but I suspect that after dilgent memorization of its myriad symbols and abbreviations it will prove useful to every serious birder. There are a few errors here and there—the phalaropes are labled "Phalaropidae" rather than "Phalaropodidae", and the publisher of McCaskie and DeBenedictis' *Birds of Northern California* is incorrectly listed (Golden Gate Audubon Society was the publisher). The typographic design of the book as a whole is satisfactory but has its bizarre aspects, such as setting table headings in boldface on one page (53) and in body type a few pages later (57), and the use of 8-point type for subheads in several places.

Gene Christman's line drawings are quite attractive and I look forward to seeing the color plates (which were not available in my unbound review copy). *Water Birds of California* should be a sure-fire gift item this winter; I certainly intend to stuff it into a stocking or two.

Pelagic Birds of Monterey Bay, California, by Richard W. Stallcup. Western Field Ornithologists, Tiburon, California (reprinted from *Western Birds*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1976).

Though hardly a "book" at 24 pages, if you could take only one bird book on your next pelagic trip out of Monterey it should probably be this one. It describes Monterey Bay, suggests when and how to bird it, and has more detailed descriptions of the birds than are available in any popular field guide. Especially valuable are descriptions of a few species (Streaked Shearwater, Cape Petrel, Galapagos Storm-Petrel, for example) covered poorly or not at all by most books about California birds. Nine species are illustrated by black-and-white photographs, seven by drawings. Copies are available from Phil Schaeffer, 376 Greenwood Beach Road, Tiburon, California 94920. Price: $1.50 (ten or more, $1.00 each) postpaid. Make checks payable to Western Field Ornithologists.

—NICK STORY

Whale Trips Scheduled

Trips to view migrating California gray whales have been scheduled to leave from Monterey harbor on January 7 and 8. Past trips have produced excellent views of the gray whale, Dall porpoise, white-sided dolphins, harbor porpoise, California sea lions, sea otters, harbor seals and other species of marine mammals.

The fare will be $15 per person. Reservations can be obtained by sending a self addressed stamped envelope and check payable to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2718 Telegraph Ave., #206, Berkeley, CA 94705. Details on where and when to meet will be sent with acknowledgement.

Los Banos Christmas Count

The Los Banos Christmas Bird Count this year will be held on December 27. This is an interesting count with several winter specialties —White-faced Ibis, Whistling Swan, Ross' Goose, Ferruginous Hawk, Sandhill Crane—and active Bay Area birders are encouraged to join it. For information call Nick Story in Berkeley at 642-5038 (work) or 527-0210 (home), or Virgil Frizzell in Menlo Park at 325-0905 (home).

1977 Nesting Results from Audubon Canyon Ranch

For the last eleven years an in-depth study of the nesting season of the Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets in Schwartz Grove has been made by Helen Pratt. This year's was of more than usual interest because of the late return of the egrets and last year's predation. There were forty-one breeding pairs of Great Blue Herons and they raised fifty-five chicks. Even though the Great Egrets arrival was much later than usual, there were eighty-four breeding pairs, resulting in seventy-eight young. There was attrition for both species, and in summary Ms. Pratt writes, "For both the Great Blue Herons and the Great Egrets the number of young raised per breeding pair in 1977 was low. The herons lost more broods to accident and disease or parasite overload than usual and had more difficulty raising (the usual) three young, perhaps because food was hard to find. The egrets lost more broods than usual, perhaps to owl predation. Low hatching success reduced brood size so they raised more broods of one and fewer broods of three than usual".

Sylvia McLaughlin Honored

A past director of GGAS from 1971 through 1974, and until this June a director of National Audubon, Sylvia McLaughlin has been named the 1977 recipient of Berkeley's Benjamin Ide Wheeler Award. Sylvia, with two other women, Mrs. Clark Kerr and Mrs. Charles Gulick, founded the Save San Francisco Bay Association. Their efforts led to

the Legislature's creation of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). Mrs. McLaughlin's list of civic and conservation achievements is endless.

Established in 1929, the Wheeler Award is given biennially to "Berkeley's most useful citizen . . . distinguished in public life". This is the first time it has been awarded to a conservationist. We are all very proud knowing how much time and effort Sylvia has also put in for the Audubon cause.

—GGAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Questionaires

The rate of return on the questionaires has been overwhelming; a walloping 6.2%. According to public relations firms, this is four percent higher than national averages for returns. We thank you for your response, your interest and your comments. Please be assured that all questions put to the Board will be answered personally. Compilation will begin shortly and the results published in *The Gull.*

—GGAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gifts and Bequests

In memory of:	**Gift of:**
Dr. Albert Boles	Marie Leffmann
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Memorial and honorary gifts and bequests will be used as specified by the donors. Acknowledgement will be made in *The Gull* and personally by the Corresponding Secretary, Gail Overstreet. Please send checks made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society to: Corresponding Secretary, GGAS, 2718 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, California 94705. All gifts are tax deductible.

Again, we bring to your attention that in order for donations to Audubon Canyon Ranch to be acknowledged in *The Gull* all checks must be made out to GGAS and sent through the GGAS office c/o the Corresponding Secretary.

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Send address changes to office promptly; Post Office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: third Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national $15 per year (individual); $18 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL;* to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately $3 per year; single issues 30¢. High school and college student membership $8.50 per year. Senior citizen individual, $12.00; senior citizen family, $15.00.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

***The Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month.**